TITLE: An Action Relating to Resources and Development, Health, Education and Human Services and Naabik'íyáti' Committees; Strongly Advising that the Indian Health Service, Office of Environmental Health, Streamline Delivery of Sanitation Services

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET

Tracking No. 0035-21

DATE: March 3, 2021

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACTION RELATING TO RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES AND NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEES; STRONGLY ADVISING THAT THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE, OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, STREAMLINE DELIVERY OF SANITATION SERVICES

PURPOSE: This resolution, if adopted, would strongly advise that the Indian Health Service, Office of Environmental Health, to streamline delivery of sanitation services.

This written summary does not address recommended amendments as may be provided by the standing committees. The Office of Legislative Counsel requests each Council Delegate to review each proposed resolution in detail.
PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

24th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL – Third Year, 2021

INTRODUCED BY

(Prime Sponsor) EDWARD YAZIE

TRACKING NO. 0035-21

AN ACTION

RELATING TO RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH, EDUCATION
AND HUMAN SERVICES AND NAABIK’ÍYÁT’ COMMITTEES; STRONGLY
ADVISING THAT THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE, OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, STREAMLINE DELIVERY OF SANITATION
SERVICES

WHEREAS:
A. The Resources and Development Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo
Nation Council. 2 N.N.C. § 500(A). The committee, among other duties and
responsible authority over such matters as water, the environment
and public utilities. 2 N.N.C. § 500(C).
B. The Health, Education and Human Services Committee is a standing committee of
the Navajo Nation Council. 2 N.N.C. § 400(A). Among other responsibilities, the
committee oversees all education and health-related activities of the Navajo Nation. 2
N.N.C. § 401(C)(2).
C. The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council
2 N.N.C. § 700(A). The committee, among other responsibilities, “coordinate[s] all
federal, county and state programs with other standing committees and branches of the
Navajo Nation government to provide the most efficient delivery of services to the Navajo
D. The Indian Health Service, Office of Environmental Health, hereafter referred to as IHS, has the responsibility through Public Law 86-121 to provide sanitary facilities including but not limited to indoor plumbing, piped water services, cisterns systems, wastewater domestic sewer lines, and septic tank and drain field systems to federally recognized Native American and Alaskan Native tribes, including the Navajo Nation and its people.

E. The IHS provides typical feedback to customers once a customer is funded on a project, and the average timeline to complete construction is five (5) years. This typical time frame is far too lengthy for people to wait for sanitary services and life sustaining potable water supply. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis revealed and reemphasized the substantial amount of Navajo homes that still do not have these basic services.

F. The response to COVID-19 by the IHS Headquarters of installing transitional watering points was very much appreciated. However, the Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS) is substantially outdated.

G. The IHS 121 program is also unacceptably underfunded to meet the needs on the Navajo Nation. The unmet need as of December 2020 on Navajo Nation was $535 million and increasing by $15.5 million per year. See attached Exhibit A, letter dated December 23, 2020 from NAIHS to President Jonathan Nez, Navajo Area IHS Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS) List – FY 2021.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The Navajo Nation hereby strongly advises that the Indian Health Service, Office of Environmental Health, streamline delivery of its sanitation services and make the process of delivering these critical services much more efficient. More particularly:

A. The IHS program must reevaluate the funding level to systematically address the substantial unmet needs on the Navajo Nation and create a dedicated timeline to accomplish these objectives.

B. The IHS must update the data and bring current the Sanitation Deficiency System for homes lacking service on the Navajo Nation.
C. The IHS must provide proper and sufficient resources to the Navajo Area Indian Health Services, its Office of Environmental Health program, so that the program can timely execute the needed projects within the Navajo Nation.

D. The IHS must also review and make effective the rules, regulations and criteria for the work required and funded.